

## Section II: Economic Development and E-Commerce

*Are economic development initiatives tied to the needs of Information Age businesses? These efforts should include the development and support of local entrepreneurs and the development of a skilled workforce.*

Economic development is the driver behind technology-related development efforts. Accordingly, this section is more in-depth than many of the other sections.

List the 20 largest employers in your community.

- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1.  | 11. |
| 2.  | 12. |
| 3.  | 13. |
| 4.  | 14. |
| 5.  | 15. |
| 6.  | 16. |
| 7.  | 17. |
| 8.  | 18. |
| 9.  | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

List the 20 largest users of technology in your community. In many communities, the list of largest of employers and largest users of technology will be similar. If you cannot list the 20 largest users of technology, identifying these organizations may be a good initial activity for the committee.

- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1.  | 11. |
| 2.  | 12. |
| 3.  | 13. |
| 4.  | 14. |
| 5.  | 15. |
| 6.  | 16. |
| 7.  | 17. |
| 8.  | 18. |
| 9.  | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

Are representatives of the largest employers and users of technology on your technology committee? Their participation and support is critical to the success of local technology-related development efforts.

Members of the technology committee may want to consider visiting the largest employers/users of technology to invite them to participate in technology-related development efforts and to determine:

- How are the largest employers/users of technology using technology?
- What are the largest employers/users of technology spending on telecommunications and information technology annually? What percentage of those expenditures are leaving the community? Is there a way that these expenditures could be kept in the community?
- What are the current technology needs of the largest employers/users of technology?
- What are the future technology needs of the largest employers/users of technology?
- What can the community do to help them meet their technology needs?

**A. This section should be initially completed by an individual or group of individuals designated by the information technology committee to be the section leader(s).**

<b>Economic development factors to assess:</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>future actions</b>
Does the community's economic development strategic plan recognize threats and opportunities posed by the Information Economy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a coalition of public and private organizations who support the development and recruitment of information technology businesses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have community leaders formally targeted information-based businesses for development and recruitment to the community? Are any or all of the following targeted?			
▪ Back-office businesses such as finance centers, title companies, insurance companies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Inbound call centers providing order taking or service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Telemarketing firms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Warehouse and shipping companies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Video or audio development companies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Brokerage firms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Software development companies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Web service companies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Regional headquarters of companies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Information technology manufacturers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the community assisting businesses by developing and/or recruiting information workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are city, county, and regional authorities prepared to "fast track" approvals for construction, site plans, utility extensions, inspection, etc. in order to meet a new or expanding business's time frame?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have economic development leaders fashioned incentives that fit information-based businesses? These may be training programs, facilities, property tax incentives, capital investment incentives or other innovative programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Economic development factors (continued):</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>future actions</b>
Does the community have a program to incubate or assist information technology businesses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a program to foster telecommuting work at home through information technology?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the community work to attract "lone eagles" – professionals who are able to work anywhere they choose because of information technology?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do travel/tourism organizations use the Internet to promote restaurants, lodging and attractions in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the Internet used for economic development research and prospecting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the community Web site have information on the following:			
▪ Available sites and facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Available telecommunications infrastructure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Available utility services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Labor statistics including availability, skill levels, and wage levels for representative job classes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Training programs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Incentive programs (if any)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Educational institutions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Housing information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Contact people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the local chamber of commerce recognize businesses that are innovatively using information technology in the community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the community have a technology park or a facility that can house an information technology business?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the community have information technology support services (i.e., computer and printer repair services or network support services)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have local or state economic development officials worked to create "clusters" of similar types of information businesses? Such clusters are able to address training needs, infrastructure needs, governmental regulatory problems, and attract similar businesses. Examples include call center associations, lone eagle groups, and Web developer associations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Electronic commerce factors to assess (continued):	yes	no	future actions
Are there resources (public or private) in the community for businesses who want to learn to conduct electronic commerce?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are at least 75% of small businesses online?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do at least 50% of small business have broadband access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do at least 50% of small businesses have a Web site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Can local businesses accept credit card payments or other types of payments which can be made electronically?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
There are several types of electronic commerce. Are 50-75% of small businesses in the community using the Internet to:			
▪ Research market information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Research competitors' offerings and prices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Send e-mail and transfer documents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Track government and large company procurement announcements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Advertise products?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Purchase materials and supplies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Sell products using a toll-free number advertised on the Web?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Sell products over the Web using credit card transactions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a business in the community that offers Web design services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there more than one business in the community that offers Web design services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does a local Internet service provider host Web sites for local businesses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there two or more local Internet service providers hosting Web sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there local outlets for shipping products in a timely manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are these tools generally being used by small businesses in the community:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Computerized accounting/bookkeeping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ Computerized inventory (if there is an inventory)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
▪ A business plan which incorporates information technology?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**B. This section should be initially completed by an individual or group of individuals designated by the information technology committee to be the section leader(s).**

**On a scale of 1 to 4, evaluate your community's economic development and e-commerce readiness:**

- 1      Economic development efforts do not address Information Age businesses. Few local businesses are using information technology to improve productivity and expand markets.
- 2      There is some recognition in the community that information technology is an economic development tool. Some local businesses are using information technology effectively to improve productivity and expand markets.
- 3      Economic development efforts are beginning to target Information Age businesses. Most small businesses are using information technology effectively to improve productivity and expand markets. At least 50% of businesses have a Web site and 75% of businesses are online.
- 4      Economic development efforts are tied to the needs of Information Age businesses. Nearly all small businesses have integrated information technology into their business processes and plans.

**What are our strengths in the area of economic development and e-commerce?**

**What resources and assets are available in the community to address economic development and e-commerce? What resources and assets are available regionally or in the state?**

*The Nebraska Electronic Main Street program offered by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension's Connecting Nebraska Team introduces businesses to e-commerce ([connecting.unl.edu](http://connecting.unl.edu)). Community colleges may also offer e-commerce programming. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development ([www.neded.org](http://www.neded.org)) may be able to provide assistance in technology-related development efforts. NPPD ([www.nppd.com](http://www.nppd.com)) and local power districts may also offer assistance for economic development efforts. Other resources for helping small businesses and entrepreneurs include Grow Nebraska ([www.grownebraska.org](http://www.grownebraska.org)), Nebraska Cooperative Development Center's Buy Nebraska program ([www.buynebraska.org](http://www.buynebraska.org)), REAP ([www.cfra.org/reap/](http://www.cfra.org/reap/)), and the Nebraska EDGE program ([nebraskaedge.unl.edu](http://nebraskaedge.unl.edu)).*

**What are some ways in which economic development and e-commerce could be strengthened?**